

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 8, 2006

Kathleen Clark
Director
Bureau of Land Management
Interior Building, Room 3314
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Director Clark:

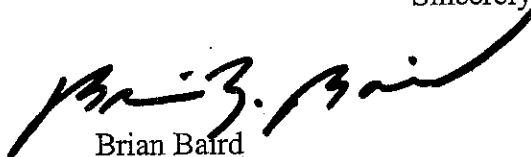
We are writing in response to the Bureau of Land Management's recent decision to freeze the Oregon State University grant funded through the Joint Fire Science Program. It is our understanding that the last \$100,000 of the \$307,000 grant has been frozen by BLM.

We understand the importance of ensuring that grant recipients honor the Assistance Agreement they agree when grants are awarded. We respect your need to ensure recipients follow the rules and that research is not politicized. However, we are concerned that the temporary freezing of funds by the BLM may lead to the perception that the agency is only politicizing it further. This action may even leave the impression of scientific censorship by the BLM. Research into post-wildfire conditions is needed and should be encouraged by the federal government. Unfortunately, BLM's recent action may discourage these activities.

The Forest Emergency Recovery and Research Act (HR 4200), which we introduced last fall, promotes important research into post-catastrophic forest conditions. Under the bill, anytime the Secretary of Agriculture or Secretary of the Interior evaluates a post-catastrophic landscape, they will identify potential research projects and conduct those that are appropriate. They will also form Forest Health Partnerships with institutions of higher education to address catastrophic event recovery. Finally, a proposed Manager's Amendment will add a dedicated funding source from any harvest sales revenue to ensure that this research is carried out.

Once again, we understand the position in which the BLM has been placed by recent events. However, it is important that post-catastrophic research continue to be carried out in an open, non-politicized manner. We hope you will reconsider the temporary freeze you have placed on OSU's grant funding. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,



Brian Baird



Greg Walden